



**News From**

# **JACK DOYLE**

## **MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **DOYLE IN WASHINGTON TO TALK ON LOCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED UNITED/USAirways MERGER**

*County Executive Visits Departments of Transportation & Justice*

County Executive Jack Doyle is in Washington, DC today to express concern over the local impact of the proposed United Airlines/USAirways merger. Doyle and Airport Director Terry Slaybaugh met with officials from the Department of Transportation and the Department of Justice's Anti-Trust Division to discuss possible impacts the merger would have on Monroe County's air travelers.

When combined, United and USAirways account for fifty-six percent of the passengers at GRIA. In addition to the overall reduction in air carrier competition that the merger would create, United's proposed takeover of USAirways would also have major impacts on service from GRIA to Washington's Reagan National Airport. Washington is the number four origin and destination (O&D) city for passengers at GRIA.

"As one of the most costly airfare markets in the United States, it is critical that our voice be heard on this proposed merger," said Doyle. "Washington, DC is among our top O&D markets, so any decisions that will impact prices and competition on this route are very important."

More than 100,000 passengers a year travel between Rochester and Washington. This market is currently served by USAirways with five jet trips per day. Under the proposed merger, a new airline, DC Air, would be created and controlled by United. DC Air would operate out of Reagan National using USAirways current slots.

Under DC Air's plan for service, filed with the United States Department of Transportation, capacity would be reduced by fifty-five percent in Rochester. This reduction in service to the number four O&D market for GRIA would mean reduced competition, which has driven up prices in the past. Currently, the walk-up fare From GRIA to Reagan National is more than \$700.

Throughout his discussions with officials in both the Justice and Transportation Departments, Doyle questioned United's "DC Air proposal" and the effect it would have on prices and competition at GRIA (the fourth highest airfare market in the country).

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“We have been working very hard to explain the local impact of changes at LaGuardia and Reagan National Airports to the appropriate officials here in Washington,” said Doyle. “I will continue to work with federal officials, Senator Schumer, and others to find ways to increase competition to all destinations, particularly our top markets.”

Doyle was in Washington just last week to testify before the Congressional Aviation Subcommittee on the LaGuardia lottery/slot issue and its impact on competition at the Greater Rochester International Airport (GRIA). As a result of the lottery at LaGuardia, Delta airlines announced today that it would be cutting service to the Buffalo airport – a move that validated Doyle’s prior testimony and might signal similar announcements at GRIA in the future.

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